How To Guide: Develop a targeted consumer education campaign using innovative, interactive technologies

This activity encourages the development of new, interactive technologies, such as CD-Roms and web sites, to provide targeted consumer information. Consumer education is critical to changing attitudes toward energy consumption and to changing purchasing patterns. States can provide clear, current information about the benefits and long-term value to consumers from investing in energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies, practices, and products. This information can influence a change in consumer preferences and spark market demand for energy efficiency and renewable energy.

Desired Outcome:

Spur demand for energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies, practices, and products.

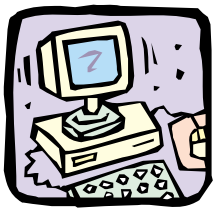
Program Design

Steps

1. Develop baseline and performance metrics (e.g., goal is to increase sales of green products by x).
2. Establish evaluation plan. This step needs to be dynamic and integrated throughout the process.
3. Identify what drives consumer purchasing decisions and what information is needed to influence decisions.
4. Define target audience(s) and identify the audience's needs.
5. Determine message (e.g., "Buy green" "Practice energy efficiency," etc.); keep it simple and catchy; clearly identify benefits to consumer.
   [Note: important to maintain product neutrality and present balanced information.]
6. Determine best approaches to target diverse audiences (paid advertising, PSAs, bill stuffers, web site, interactive kiosk, etc.).
7. Look for opportunities to use innovative, interactive technologies, e.g., web sites with "plug and chug" capabilities.
8. Determine best entity to implement campaign, e.g., cooperative extension service, schools, private sector media firms, etc.
9. Develop program partnerships with community groups. Seek partners who are already established in the community and who are trusted; seek partners who will use both group interaction and who will talk one on one with potential customers. Examples: neighborhood groups, community leadership groups, church groups, groups aimed at the children of potential clients such and Boys and Girls Clubs or Scouts.
10. Develop partnerships with businesses who benefit. Work with home improvement stores to include information at store sites and to advertise, particularly at key times such as fall winterization.
11. Implement marketing activities.
12. Monitor and adjust as necessary.
13. Document results.

Partners and Possible Incentives

- **Utility companies:** Load management; goodwill gesture (providing consumer information) to build community image.
- **DOE Energy Star program and other federal and State energy efficiency programs:** Shared message and goals; mutually beneficial to align efforts and promote message.
- **Energy/environmental associations/interest groups:** Shared message and goals; mutually beneficial to align efforts and promote message.
- **Universities:** Students may provide low-cost technical assistance for developing tools to gain experience and exposure.
- **Media:** Information will benefit consumers (audience); goodwill gesture to build community image.
- **Equipment and service vendors:** Raising consumer awareness of energy efficiency benefits will increase demand for products/services.
- **Business organizations (e.g., Chamber of Commerce):** Businesses benefit from integrating energy efficiency; also, businesses provide a valuable customer service by disseminating information and may build clientele.
- **Private sector partners:** Opportunities to capitalize on promotional activities, e.g., can promote energy efficiency improvements during Energy Awareness Month.
- **Home improvement stores:** Information will benefit customers; goodwill gesture to build community image; information may spur sales of energy efficiency products.
- **Libraries:** Many have tool exchange programs and may build on consumer education information provided.



Resources Available

- Department of Energy Laboratories and Facilities (www.doe.gov/people/peopnl.htm) Quick link to all DOE labs, facilities, and special offices.
  - Argonne National Laboratory (ANL) (www.anl.gov)
  - Brookhaven National Laboratory (www.bnl.gov)
  - E. O. Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL) (www.lbl.gov)
  - Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory (www.inel.gov)
  - National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) (www.nrel.gov)
  - Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) (www.ornl.gov)
  - Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL) (www.pnl.gov)
  - Sandia National Laboratories (SNL) (www.sandia.gov)
- The Center of Excellence for Sustainable Development (www.sustainable.doe.gov) Expansive database for sustainable development resources.
- Clean Energy for the 21st Century (www.eren.doe.gov/cleanenergy/links.html) User friendly educational site on what clean energy is and where/how it can be applied.
- Energy Star (www.energystar.gov) Quick access and easy to understand energy efficiency product information.
- Environmental Protection Agency (www.epa.gov) Easy to use educational site for all ages, includes regulation and policy information.
- Association of State Energy Research and Technology Transfer Institution (www.energy.wsu.edu/cfdocs/asertti/default.cfm) This is a “confederation of state and regional organizations.” All partners are listed.
- The Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (www.reeusda.gov/1700/statepartners/usa.htm) Master list of all State/university extension services.
- Rocky Mountain Institute (www.rmi.org) Great for discovering market-based solutions.
- National Association of Home Builders (www.nahb.com) Features energy-efficient public service projects and information.
- Alliance to Save Energy (www.ase.org) Reliably-updated energy information source for consumers and professionals.
- American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy (www.aceee.org) Guides to top rated energy-efficient products, publications, and legislative measures.
- Home Energy Rating System Council (www.hers-council.org) Promotions for energy-efficient residential improvements.
- The Utility Connection (www.utilityconnection.com/page7a.html) Refers to all public electric, gas, water, and financial resources sites.
- The Interstate Renewable Energy Council (www.irecusa.org) Provides an extensive resource guide on latest technology and information for renewables.
- The State Public Interest Research Groups (www.pirg.org) State programs and campaigns and other environmental resources.
- Union of Concerned Scientists (www.ucsusa.org) Informative and readable information on green living.
- Who’ s Who in Renewable Energy Online (www.serve.com/commonpurpose/contacts.html) This is a massive intersection point to numerous renewable energy contacts.

Key Conditions/ Factors

- Access to baseline information
- Access to technology
- Ability to identify what drives consumer decisions and target message to address these factors

Special Opportunities for Success

- Volatility in energy prices (due to restructuring, supply shortages, etc.) will spur consumer demand for information about energy efficiency/renewable energy.
- "Green" climate in State
- Smaller retail outlets may be more open to promoting energy efficiency as a competitive edge over large chains

Success Boosters

- Regular maintenance and frequent updates (web site)
- Information system security

Resources Needed

- Technical assistance to develop tools
- Creative staff to craft message
- Funds for staff and materials

Barriers and Potential Solutions

- **Resistance to change and new technology:** Educate on benefits and make tools easy to use for a novice.
- **Need for technical computer programming staff:** Seek assistance from college students looking for experience; look to "sharing" technical staff with other programs/agencies.
- **Expense of new information applications:** Use SEP grant as "seed" money to leverage support from partners; seek funding from Special Projects and other government programs.
- **Lack of availability of consistent energy technology information:** Peer exchange among States on what has worked and what needs improvement.

Technology Transfer Plan

- Disseminate materials developed; publish program results (report success stories in WinSAGA)
- Make presentations at conferences, seminars, and participate in peer exchange
- Seek opportunities to expand programs and services

Metrics

Primary:

- Percentage increase in sales of energy efficiency/renewable energy products or services (compared to baseline)

Other Indicators:

- Consumer satisfaction with information (survey)
- Number of web site hits

Case Studies

Virginia

The Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME) has worked with State agencies and institutions to ensure they use energy resources efficiently and effectively. DMME assists State agencies to take advantage of the opportunities under utility restructuring to increase the efficiency of their operations. DMME is implementing a second-generation utility data management system with State agencies. The objective of this system is to better manage the utility use and profile data that will be needed to bid for independent utility suppliers, make energy efficiency investment decisions, and to evaluate the effectiveness of these actions. As part of this work, DMME will work with the Department of Planning and Budget to develop guidelines for use of a $1 million State general fund appropriation for utility metering and energy efficiency projects.

Pennsylvania

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is working with the Environmental Fund of Pennsylvania to develop a series of videos on a variety of environmental and energy issues. These video programs will be 30-minutes in length and will be broadcast once a month for a period of 12 months. The show will be shot in digital DVC and SVHS and digitally edited. The series will be promoted through public service announcements and printed media such as display ads and newsletters. Each show will feature two 30 to 60 second commercials promoting the importance of energy conservation. Shows will also be on the Interactive Learning Center site on the DEP web site. Different topics for energy/environmental efficiency will be introduced each month. At least one show will be devoted exclusively to energy issues.